

## The Lady Badgers are back

With a new coach at the helm of a young squad, Lampasas looks to dominate with defense

By CLAY WHITTINGTON  
Staff Writer

Lady Badger head soccer coach Mark Guszak is fully aware his team could struggle on offense this season, but he has a plan.

Instead of playing an up-tempo style and trying to outscore opposing teams, Guszak will look to compensate by playing solid defense and keeping the games close in hopes of getting a lucky bounce every now and then.

"If you can keep the other team from scoring and you put yourself in a position to win, then goals sometimes just happen," Guszak said. "Sometimes you work hard to create one, and sometimes they just happen, but if you can keep the score down then you always have a chance."

Lampasas' first opportunity to try out the philosophy comes tonight at 7:30 p.m. when the Lady Badgers travel to Stephenville for a scrimmage.

Their regular-season opener is set for Tuesday at Brownwood, and the district schedule is slated to begin in early February with a trip to Hutto.

"You never know where they are at [as a whole] until you put them out there against another team," Guszak said. "When we started off we were pretty rough, then as the year developed, the passing got a lot more crisp and the communication got a lot more crisp, and we got more optimistic about the season."

"But until you put your starting 11 out there against another team's starting 11, then you don't know what you have."

Guszak, an LHS product in his first year as head coach, takes over the role after the resignation of Debbie Mason last year.

With extra emphasis being placed on keeping opponents' offensive outputs to a minimum, goalkeeper Liz Hawthorn will be vital to the Lady Badgers' success.

Hawthorn, however, comes into the season with some pretty big cleats to fill.

She takes over the position following the departure of senior Bonnie Wallace, who earned goalkeeper of the year honors for District 25-4A last season.

Despite the key loss, Guszak believes his team could allow countless balls to slip into the goal without necessarily considering the



season a failure. Needless to say, he has no intention of letting such a thing occur.

"I don't think [success is defined] with wins and losses," the coach said. "Certainly, we're going to go out to win every game, but if you play a powerhouse like Lake Travis [and lose a hard-fought game], then there are still positives in there."

While the graduation of Wallace hurts the Lady Badgers at the net, the squad also returns a pair of All-District selections from last season.

Midfielder Angel Waters earned a spot on last year's first-team ballot as a junior and, as a four-year starter, she will be expected to

provide senior leadership to a trio of freshmen joining her in the starting lineup.

"Waters is probably our most valuable player and our most talented player," Guszak said. "It makes it a lot easier to have those types of players on the field because you have a coach on the field, and she definitely plays that role."

Junior Ashley Thompson was named to the second team as a defender and will be vital in the team's defense-oriented game plan.

Although she will not be sporting an armband signifying her as a team captain, Thompson will serve



PHOTOS BY RICHARD AKRIDGE

Left: Midfielder Angel Waters leaps for a header during practice Tuesday. Above: The Lady Badgers varsity squad: back row from left, River Hooks, Tori Hawthorn, Megan Mason, Jontel Ritz, Morgan Tongish, Liz Hawthorn and Angel Waters; front row from left, Taylor Stephens, Dayna Noonan, Susie Goodpaster, Andrea Dibble, Samantha Thomas and Samantha Almanzar. Not pictured are Kassie Carpenter, Ashley Thompson, Sarah Pillow and Angelica Reyna.

as an unofficial captain to the relatively inexperienced squad. Officially, Waters, Hawthorn and junior Kassie Carpenter will be recognized on the field as squad captains.

"Thompson is definitely in charge of that defense," Guszak said. "She's telling people where they need to be, and she's leading by example."

"She told me she doesn't need a band on her arm to be a leader, and I agree with that."

**Scrimmage tonight**  
The Lady Badgers varsity soccer team gets its first taste of action tonight when the girls travel to Stephenville for a scrimmage at 7:30 p.m.

year's squad. "The goals we've set are to go out there, play smart, play your position, have fun and basically have a good time," Guszak said. "If we have good kids that practice hard and do what they're told, then we'll be satisfied."

"We want some wins to come along with it, and we think we'll get our wins, but I just want to have the kids out there doing what they're told to do, doing it well and having a good time doing it."

River Hooks, Tori Hawthorn, Sarah Pillow and Andrea Dibble are all returning members from last

## LMS basketball teams end 2008 with victories

By CLAY WHITTINGTON  
Staff Writer

The Lampasas Middle School basketball teams were grabbing wins hand over fist prior to the holiday break.

Like eager kids on Christmas morning, the Badgers and Lady Badgers snatched up victories like they were presents under a tree.

The LMS seventh-grade girls led the way, winning either the championship or consolation championship in all three tournaments in which they participated.

With three consecutive victories in its home tournament, the "B" team earned first-place honors on its own court by defeating Burnet in a nail-biter, 25-24, for the championship.

After dropping its opening-round contest, the Lampasas "C" team also beat Burnet and gained top honors in the consolation bracket.

The "A" team traveled to Gatesville and won the consolation championship.

On the boys' side, the seventh-grade "C" team won four of six contests.

The Badgers knocked off Marble Falls 29-19 behind a team-high six points from Jack Conner. Ryan Allendar tallied five points in the win, and Trey Combs finished with four.

Conner again led the way against Burnet's "B" team in tournament play, scoring eight points in a 20-19 victory.

Cullen Lockburn posted four points, and four other Badgers

netted two points apiece.

Lampasas then fell in back-to-back games versus Copperas Cove and Copperas Cove Lee "B" teams.

It did not take long for the Badgers to bounce back, however, as they traveled to Burnet and beat the home "C" team by 18 points at 39-21.

Conner took team scoring honors with a dozen points, while Zane Green put up six and Lucas Moncus netted five.

Combs, Allendar and Lockburn all scored four points for the Badgers.

Lampasas won the rematch at home easily, 35-23, as Mason Tabor posted 10 points. Kwentien Joseph and Conner finished with six each.

"This is a really good group of young men who are working hard and getting better each day," head coach Jim Burks said.

The eighth-grade "C" team won its second consecutive game with a 24-20 victory over the Bulldogs at home.

The Badgers rushed out to a 14-5 lead in the opening quarter before Burnet rallied to threaten LMS late in the contest.

Jeremy Cantu led Lampasas with seven points, edging out Riley Tedford as the team's top offensive performer.

Arex Clark (4 pts.) and Aaron Cuffie (3 pts.) also were productive for the home team. Dallas Brooks and Jameson Varnado tallied a field goal apiece.

After getting blown out by Hill Country 52-19, the eighth-grade "A" team responded with a 38-21

victory over Cameron in the first round of the Gatesville Tournament.

"We started with the best game we have played all season and were able to roll past Cameron," head coach Aaron Nuckles said. "I thought our team defense was very solid in the game."

"We did not give Cameron very many fast-break opportunities, and they really had trouble running any offensive sets against our defense."

Mason Murray (9 pts.), Cullen Singleton (8 pts.), and Bryce Perkins (8 pts.) combined for 25 points, 14 rebounds, six assists and eight steals in the win.

The Badgers ran into host team Gatesville in the second round and fell into an early nine-point hole before clawing their way to within one-point in the closing moments.

Unfortunately, Lampasas could not get any closer and lost 26-25.

Point guard Murray recorded team-highs with 10 points and six steals, while Perkins pulled down eight of LMS' 15 rebounds.

"I was proud to see the guys continue to fight throughout the game and give themselves a chance to win it at the end," Nuckles said. "It is too bad we played so poorly in the opening minutes of the game."

In the third-place game, the Badgers faced Waco Robinson and lost by 22 points, 36-14, giving them a 3-5 record heading into the break.

The eighth-grade "A" team returns to the court Jan. 8, kicking off its district schedule with a road game at Lake Travis.



### Lampasas cover boy

Gabe Wolf's photo of Badgers' defensive lineman Carter Burks trying to pull down Lake Travis' star quarterback Garrett Gilbert (top left) was selected to grace the cover of the November edition of Texas Coach magazine. Gilbert rarely encountered pressure during a season that saw the Cavaliers run the regular-season table and win a second consecutive 4A state championship.